



PALM Expert

Believe it or not, hacking can sometimes be beneficial to your system. Here Julian Prokaza takes a look at a handful of the finest hacks – those program fixes that make the Palm operating system easier to use



PALM NEWS

LIFEDRIVE LIVES

After months of speculation, PalmOne has finally unveiled its newest handheld, the LifeDrive. The LifeDrive uses a 4GB hard disk instead of flash memory storage and can be used as a portable hard disk when connected via USB. It has a 320x480 pixel display, which can be used in both portrait and landscape modes. Inside, there is a 416MHz Xscale processor and support for connecting via 802.11b wireless networking and Bluetooth.

The LifeDrive supports Word, Excel, PowerPoint and PDF files, and includes a web browser and VersaMail email software. It also includes some interesting security options, including the ability to automatically reset the hard disk to factory settings after a specified number of failed logins. The LifeDrive costs £329 including VAT. For further information, visit the PalmOne website at <http://euro.palmone.com/uk>.



TUNGSTEN E2 FINALLY ARRIVES

The Tungsten E2, which we mentioned in last month's *Palm Expert* news, is now on sale for £169. It resembles the previous Tungsten E closely, but it has a number of nifty new features, including a new colour 320x320 colour screen, 32MB of flash memory, Bluetooth and a longer-lasting battery. The E2 also supports the palmOne WiFi SD Card, which means Palm users can make use of wireless networking on a budget at long last.

FAREWELL TO TAPWAVE ZODIAC

It appears that Tapwave is pulling the plug on its game-playing Palm OS-based Zodiac handhelds. In an interview published recently at Tapland (www.tapland.com), senior VP of marketing, Byron Connell, said that Tapwave is moving from branded products to co-branded devices for OEM partners. So while the Zodiac may live on in some future form, current models are likely to be heavily discounted as retailers clear their stock.



Palm OS handhelds have a long history of hacks. These hacks are not malicious, but useful little programs that fix those annoying foibles the manufacturer should have sorted out in the first place. Long-time Palm users may remember products such as HackMaster that allowed programmers to write hacks to tweak various operating system settings as well as

providing Palm users with a utility that is able to manage them.

Palm OS 5 dropped support for such hacks, but they live on in spirit. We have rounded up six of our favourite hacks this month, all of which capitalise on features found on newer Palm OS handhelds that the manufacturer has chosen not to exploit for some reason.

REVIEW SCREEN ROTATION SOFTWARE

MOBILE STREAM Landscape 1.0

RATING ★★★★★

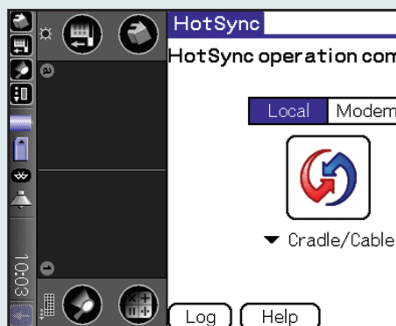
PRICE \$20 (around £11)

DETAILS www.mobile-stream.com/landscape_info.html

There's no doubt that the Clie PEG-TH55 was – and still is – one of the best PDAs around, but Sony certainly missed a trick or two. For a PDA with such a glorious 320x480 screen, it was a mystery why Sony failed to include a landscape mode. Two years on, someone has finally cracked the problem and Landscape 1.0 lets you rotate your TH55 screen through 90° with ease.

The 18KB program hijacks the clock display at the bottom-right of the TH55's screen. Tap the clock on its right side and the screen rotates anticlockwise by 90°; tap the clock on the left and the screen rotates the other way. The demo version adds a short delay before switching the screen, but otherwise Landscape works a treat. Unfortunately, as the TH55 wasn't designed to work in landscape mode, its built-in applications don't resize to use the full screen. The pop-up Graffiti area doesn't rotate either, although it still works as you'd expect when you write on it.

Mobile Stream's Landscape 1.0 is currently the only way to rotate the TH55's screen, so you should at least give the demo version a try. We're sure you'll agree that it's a useful and neat little program.



REVIEW CALENDAR VIEWER

LILREDSPIDER TMP

RATING ★★★★★

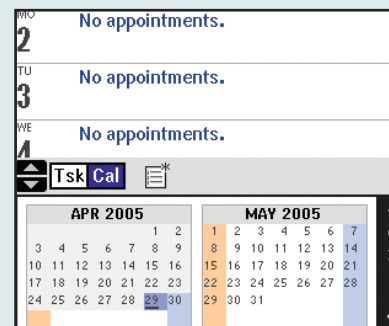
PRICE \$17 (around £9)

DETAILS www.lilredspider.com

The standard Palm OS diary program has barely changed since it first appeared on the original Palm Pilot. It's functional at best, but while more sophisticated third-party replacements are widely available, almost all are too sophisticated and bombard you with too many unwanted features.

If all you want is a clearer view of your upcoming appointments, check out TMP. This little application comes from the 'do one thing and do it well' school of programming. While some may quibble at its \$17 price, there's no denying that it's very slick.

TMP displays a week or so of forthcoming events in a dated list, and there's the option to view either outstanding tasks or a two- or four-monthly calendar below it. That's all. It pulls information from the Datebook database, and a range of font options makes sure it remains eminently readable, no matter what device it's running on. It even runs in landscape mode. When the program is assigned to your handheld's Datebook button, you have an instant way of seeing what's coming up. The current version can edit events only, not tasks, but then this is just version 1.0 of the program.



REVIEW **BLUETOOTH MANAGEMENT**

WHIZOO BtToggle

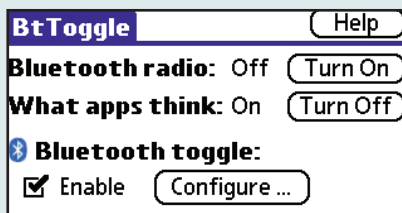
RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$15 (around £8)

DETAILS www.whizoo.com/apps/bttoggle.php

Managing Bluetooth on enabled Palm devices is simple enough but some people want more sophisticated controls. BtToggle offers just that. Available in Classic and Pro versions, the program turns Bluetooth on automatically whenever a Bluetooth-enabled program starts, and off again when it closes or the handheld is switched off.

BtToggle Pro takes things a step further and keeps Bluetooth turned off until a connection is required (and suppresses any resulting error messages), which can help prolong battery life. Both versions are included in the price, and if you use Bluetooth a lot and find it fiddly to work with, they should make life much easier.

REVIEW **FONT SOFTWARE**

LUBAK Fonts4OS5

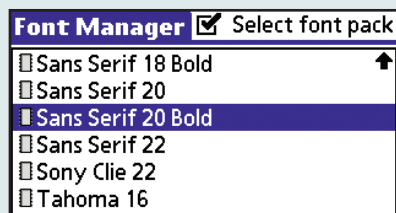
RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$13 (around £7)

DETAILS www.lubak.net

Installing different fonts on a handheld may seem crazy, but it makes more sense than you might think. These fonts replace the system fonts that the programs use, which can make everything much easier to read.

Fonts4OS5 achieves this with the minimum of fuss and includes 26 fonts to get you started. You can change the fonts for each application, so you can use different fonts for your e-book reader and address book, say. It also supports anti-aliased fonts using another program called FontSmoother, which is available from www.palmgear.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=software.showsoftware&prodID=90288.

REVIEW **SCREEN RESIZER**

ESCANDE Graffiti Anywhere

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE Free

DETAILS www.escande.org/palm/GraffitiAnywhere/index.html

Palm OS handhelds with 320x480 or 'Hi-Res+' screens rely on a virtual Graffiti input area that pops up when you need to enter some text. Losing a third of your beautiful big screen in this way is annoying, but it's not necessary if you use Graffiti Anywhere.

This free program turns the entire screen into a Graffiti input area, so you can write anywhere to input text, whenever you need to. A stylus tap in the corner of the screen toggles the program on and off, and a comprehensive set of options lets you tweak the program for the best results.



Q&A: OPERATING QUERIES

DOWNSIZING THE WEB

Q I read the guide to offline web readers in *Palm Expert*, *Shopper* July 2005 and decided to give Sunrise a go. On the whole I'm very impressed, but I'm having a problem getting it to limit itself to extracting just part of a site. Even though I've set the link depth to 1, it still extracts links to external websites and this gives some unnecessarily large files. Am I missing something?

Jenny Shufflebotham

A The link depth only limits how far Sunrise follows links from the main page, not what those links point to. For example, a link depth of 0 grabs only the main page; 1 grabs the main page and all pages it links to; 2 grabs all linked pages and all the pages they link to and so on. Don't worry, though, because another setting allows you to cut file sizes and stick to more relevant pages.

Right-click the offending entry in the Sunrise document list and click Properties. Look for the Source settings on the Main tab of the dialog box that appears. A drop-down list next to Link Depth has four settings that you can use to control the way in which Sunrise follows links.

No restriction leaves all links up for grabs, while Restrict to domain means only links that point to pages on the same

website will be followed, regardless of the link depth setting. Restrict to host limits Sunrise to links for the same host address, so that while it follows links that stay inside www.website.com, it won't follow any that point to, say, subsite.website.com. Finally, Restrict to directory limits linking to a specific folder on a domain, such as www.website.com/news.

RESET UPSET

Q My Tungsten T2 is stuck in an endless reset loop. It crashes, I reset it and it crashes again. I've tried a hard reset to wipe all the data, but the crash loop returns as soon as I HotSync. Does this sound like a hardware fault?

Donald Trent

A It's possible but not necessarily the case, Donald. The problem is more likely to lie with a troublesome program or setting that was backed up during a previous HotSync and is now being restored after a hard reset. Try another hard reset but before you HotSync, move the contents of the <user>\Archive and <User>\Backup folders in your PC's Palm data folder elsewhere to stop them being copied across. Finally, reinstall your applications one by one. The chances are that even the program that caused the problem previously will work once it's reinstalled. ☑

REVIEW **HANDHELD UTILITY**

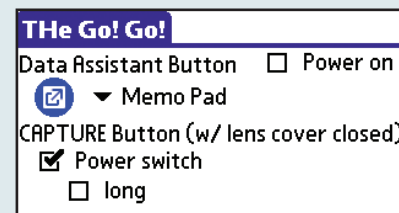
MAICCA The Go! Go!

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE Free

DETAILS www.traumvideo.de/palm/TheUtil_en.zip

This handy utility for Clie TH55 owners lets you assign more useful functions to the buttons. You can set the camera shutter button to act as a power button when the lens cover is closed and the Voice Recorder button to trigger a HotSync. You can even set an alarm to sound if you turn off the TH55 without closing the lens cover.



CONTACT

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If there is anything you would like to see covered in *Palm Expert*, please contact us at the address below

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